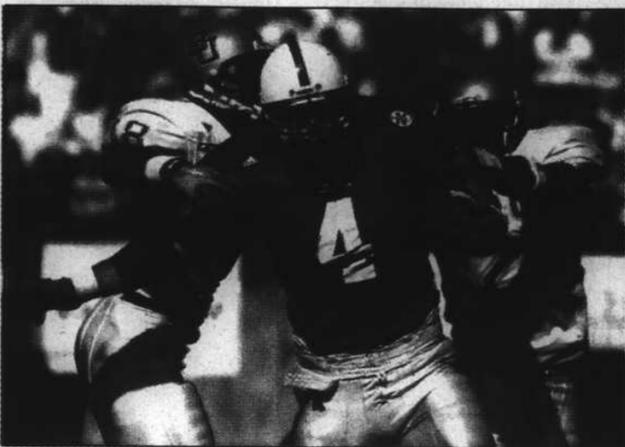


Nebraska 59, Baylor 0



LEFT: Husker I-back Dan Alexander outruns Baylor's Kyle Staudt for a touchdown. Alexander led Nebraska in yards rushing with 104 yards on 14 carries and two touchdowns.

BELOW: Husker redshirt freshman full-back Judd Davies is brought down by Baylor defenders Gary Baxter and Daniel Wiltturner. Davies rushed for 61 yards on only two carries.



A Husker hit and run NU coasts to win, turns eyes to Sooners

BY JAMIE SUHR

Nebraska needed just one series of downs to sum up its 59-0 white wash of Baylor — the game's first.

After the Cornhuskers sniffed out a flea-flicker attempt and stuffed two running plays, cornerback Keyuo Craver blocked a punt at the 19-yard line and recovered it in the end zone.

"We came out and really wanted to prove something today," said rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch, who broke up the flea-flicker. "Those first couple of series really set the tone for the game."

Craver's score opened the flood gates, to the tune of a school-record 38-first quarter points, and Nebraska coasted to the easy victory with little resistance from Baylor.

NU Coach Frank Solich's toughest decisions during the game weren't play calling, but how much playing time he'd give the starters.

"It was a game where we were able to rest some players," Solich said. "It came at a really good time for us. We're fortunate to be where we're at health wise, and I think today probably helped us."

Quarterback Eric Crouch led scoring drives in each of his five series and exited the game playing just one quarter. The Heisman Trophy candidate rushed for 46 yards on five carries and scored a touchdown.

Top-ranked NU (7-0 overall, 4-0 conference) was so dominant in the opening quarter that Solich elected to go on a fourth-and-13 at the Baylor 36. Crouch took the snap, ran the option off the right side and pitched the ball to Buckhalter who ran untouched to the end zone.

When the clock finally struck zero on the score board at the end of the opening quarter, the Huskers already held a 38-0 lead and had out-gained the Bears in yards 189-1. With such a safe lead, it was time to rest Crouch for the trip to No. 3 Oklahoma next Saturday.

"We felt like we had the game out of reach by the time I came out of the game," Crouch said. "It was important for me to stay healthy and probably the main reason I came out so early was the injury risk."

Jammal Lord relieved Crouch in the second quarter and the Husker offense didn't skip a beat.

The redshirt freshman marched NU down field on a 12-play 80-yard drive that he capped off with a two-yard score.

On his next drive, he took the Huskers on a seven-play 87-yard drive that ended with a Buckhalter seven-yard jaunt to make the score 52-0 at the half.

In Lord's most extensive playing time of the season, the signal caller from Bayonne, NJ, ran 10 times for 39 yards and completed three of six passes for 26 yards.

"I feel real good right now," Lord said. "I'm about to take Eric Crouch's space in the whirlpool."

The Huskers played top I-backs Dan Alexander and Buckhalter in just the first half of play. Alexander rushed 14 times for 104 yards and two scores, while Buckhalter ended his day with six attempts for 76 yards and two trips to pay dirt.

Most Husker starters were able to watch the rest of the game, along with 77,959 loyal fans who stuck around for nearly all of the dismantling. The first-team offensive line was the only group of starters to play into the second half.

In all, 15 different Huskers carried the ball for 459 yards. Thunder Collins had five carries for 27 yards — his only carries since NU's opening season win over San Jose State. Dahrran Diedrick ran nine times for 75 yards and a score.

The fourth quarter was devoted to getting as many players snaps as possible.

Third-string quarterback Joe Chrisman and fourth-string QB Brett Lindstrom both found field time in the final quarter.

"Any time you hold a team under 100 yards of total offense—any Division I team — it's gotta be a heck of a day for any team."

Jeremy Slechta
NU rush end

No matter who was in on defense, Baylor was getting harassed. On the Bears' third series, starting quarterback Kerry Dixon misfired on two pass attempts, before losing a fumble when sacked by Vanden Bosch.

Backup QB Guy Tomcheck, who soon relieved Dixon, didn't fare much better for the Bears (2-5, 0-4). The freshman was sacked three times and completed just 7 of 26 passes for 79 yards.

The Blackshirts yielded just five yards on the ground on 27 attempts and 84 yards of total offense.

"Any time you hold a team under 100 yards of total offense — any Division I team — it's gotta be a heck of a day for any team," rush end Jeremy Slechta said.

The 59-point blowout was NU's largest margin of victory since it beat Oklahoma — next week's opponent — 69-7 in 1997.

While it didn't appear as if Nebraska was looking ahead to next week's game against No. 3 Oklahoma, the rekindling of the old rivalry was on a few players' minds as soon as it became clear that the Huskers would have no trouble with Baylor.

"I know a lot of people were thinking about OU before this one was over, so I'm glad to get this one done so we can focus our attention on Oklahoma," center Dominic Raiola said.

Bears doomed from the start

■ Not executing lost the game for BU, not NU's 'superpowers,' team members said.

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

For Kevin Steele, Saturday was a blast from his coaching past.

Tommie Frazier was there, and so was Charlie McBride — and the game ended with a Nebraska blowout victory over an overmatched opponent.

Just like old times, right? Wrong.

Steele was on the other side of the field this time, and the opponent was his Baylor team, which lost 59-0 to the Huskers.

"I take the responsibility today," said Steele, who was an assistant in Lincoln for five years. "Don't put it on those guys in the room in there. They got a good look in their eye — they are trying hard."

The Bears might have been trying a bit too hard as they were doomed right from the start after falling behind big after less than six minutes had ticked off the clock.

NU blocked Baylor's first punt and recovered it for a touchdown, scored less than two minutes later on its first offensive possession and recovered starting quarterback Kerry

Dixon's fumble on BU's 15-yard line. Four plays later, Dan Alexander had his second touchdown and with 9:23 remaining, Steele found his team down 21-0.

Baylor's problems would snowball from that point on as NU hung a first quarter school-record 38 points on the board. It was that first 15 minutes, which actually took just under an hour, that many from Baylor would like to forget after gaining only a total of one yard on offense.

"They kicked our butts today," said senior cornerback Gary Baxter. "They beat us in every aspect of the game. They are the No. 1 team in the country."

Baxter, who led the Bears with 12 tackles, eight of which were unassisted, said NU didn't beat Baylor by talent, but in one main area — execution.

"They are not supermen," Baxter said. "They put their pants on the same way we do."

The Baylor offense did not execute as it failed to score for the third straight week, also hanging a donut up against Texas A&M and Texas Tech in its previous two games.

Dixon, a true freshman, played only the first three series and completed none of his three passes, while taking one sack and fumbling on his last drive. Steele inserted fellow freshman

Guy Tomcheck and experienced similar results.

Tomcheck completed his first pass for 23 yards and Baylor's only first down of the first quarter. From there, the quarterback, who has been in and out on the mend for Steele this season, completed 6 of 28 passes for 56 yards and was sacked twice.

"We had scheduled Guy to go in after the fourth series," Steele said. "I think Guy went in on the fourth series, and he just looked like he had a little bit of his old rhythm back. So I just kept him in there because he has played so little since his injury."

But the Bear's offensive woes went farther than the quarterback position as they completed only three of 16 third-down conversions and had a total of five yards rushing on the day. BU managed 84 total yards on the day, compared with NU's 508, 459 of which came on the ground.

Baylor running back Darrell Bush said he couldn't have dreamed of a worse performance and frustration had set in after he gained only 17 yards on 12 carries.

"You go into every ball game having the attitude that you are going to win," Bush said.

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